

OPINION
& EDITORIALS



The CENTRAL NEWSPAPER

Founder & Publisher: Joe Ingino

136 Simcoe St. N., Unit 4. Oshawa ON L1G 4S7

Tel: 905-432-2657

Email: newspaper@ocentral.com

Well Written, Well Read - Time Tested And Proven - #1 Newspaper Across Durham Region - Supporting Local Businesses

Canada can't claim a North it can't defend

By Michel Maisonneuve

We need military bases, ports and transportation corridors if we want to exercise real sovereignty over the North

"Mon pays, ce n'est pas un pays, c'est l'hiver," Gilles Vigneault sings—my country is winter. Canada is shaped by cold, distance and northern regions inhabited by resilient people. Whether we embrace it or not, we are a polar nation.

Sovereignty over nearly 10 million square kilometres must be demonstrated: we must prove we can protect the vast North, develop its resources and create opportunities for its people. We must stop thinking small.

The North holds immense undeveloped resources coveted by other nations, yet Canada has limited means to monitor the region, deter adversaries or respond to incursions.

A northern strategy needs four priorities: deterrence, defence of the territory, resource development and transportation and communications corridors. The first two require forces able to deploy nationwide and operate seamlessly with allied polar nations, plus permanent—or at least persistent—northern basing, with First Nations as full partners. Consider the Northwest Passage. When the U.S. ship Manhattan transited in 1969, Canada called it internal waters; Washington disputed the claim and went through, and Ottawa protested. The dispute remains: Canada considers the passage internal waters, while the United States considers it an international strait. How will we react when adversaries transit these "internal" waters? Sovereignty means having an answer beyond protest.

Whatever one thinks of climate change, northern temperatures have risen and keep rising. The cause is not the issue here; reversal is not on offer; adaptation is. Climate change, as University of Calgary Arctic security expert Robert Huebert puts it, has "converted the Arctic from a barrier into a corridor."

That corridor leads to resources other states want secured. Russia leads Arctic development, with dozens of vessels able to operate in and under ice; China calls itself a "near-Arctic" state and holds equity in more than two dozen Canadian mining companies. The Arctic is also a route to challenge the United States through a lightly defended Canada.

Lightly defended is not rhetoric. The Canadian Armed Forces' Joint Task Force North covers Yukon, the Northwest Territories, Nunavut and the Arctic Ocean from Yellowknife with about 300 personnel. The Canadian Rangers, a lightly armed part-time reserve of nearly 5,000, are the eyes and ears of much of the North, where every operation, resupplying a community or maintaining a radar, is a sovereignty operation.

The nearest fighter bases able to answer a NORAD emergency, Bagotville, Que., and Cold Lake, Alta., are many flying hours away; the United States keeps nine military bases in Alaska and more than 20,000 active-duty personnel. Canada cannot exercise northern sovereignty principally from southern bases.

In May, the eight Arctic allies committed to more presence, surveillance and joint training in the High North.

Security underpins trade, but infrastructure underpins security. Unmanned radars, drones and undersea sensors help identify threats, but the Canadian Armed Forces are poorly placed to manage a major northern crisis. Canada has no year-round ice-free Arctic port, and the deepwater facility at Nanisivik never became fully operational before the military began taking it out of operational use in May.

Against that record, the March 12 announcement of \$40 billion in northern investment is a real opportunity: infrastructure in Nunavut and the Northwest Territories, expanded forward operating locations at Yellowknife, Inuvik and Iqaluit, and upgraded Arctic airports. Promise must now become action.

Much of our prosperity depends on extracting and delivering resources, some of it northern. Distance and climate make that difficult; the private sector can help. Indigenous partners must share in the returns, and dual-use projects stretch public investment by serving communities, commerce and national defence.

Canada should make northern transportation and communications corridors a national priority, built with private-sector and Indigenous partners wherever possible.

The idea is not new. In 1968, Lt.-Gen. Richard Rohmer proposed an east-west mid-Canada corridor from Labrador City through Flin Flon to Fort Nelson, with highways, railways and communities to draw Canadians northward. Ontario is exploring the Ring of Fire; Quebec has its Plan Nord.

Newer concepts run south to north: from southern Manitoba to an expanded port at Churchill, or through improved facilities at Port Nelson. Either shortens the route to Europe against the haul to east- or west-coast ports.

Grays Bay, on Nunavut's Coronation Gulf, shows how these objectives can converge: a 230-kilometre all-season road toward the Northwest Territories border, a deepwater port on the Northwest Passage and an airstrip. It could become Canada's first overland link to a deepwater Arctic port, with royalties to Indigenous partners.

It is also a reminder that development alone does not guarantee sovereignty. The road and port would help unlock the Izok Lake and High Lake zinc-copper deposits, owned by MMG Limited, which is controlled through a majority interest by China Minmetals, a Chinese state-owned enterprise.

Canada needs northern investment, but it must understand who ultimately controls strategically important resources.

Canada's full potential requires legal independence, political self-determination and territorial integrity, and the means to see, deter and respond across its territory. The North holds wealth that can raise every Canadian's standard of living through responsible, market-driven development; corridors, east-west and north-south, will carry it to market. Winter is our country. It is time we governed like it.

Letters To The Editor:

WHAT IS ON YOUR MIND? Send letters to newspaper@ocentral.com

Dear Editor:

I am having a very difficult time understanding how the Province of Ontario concluded that this appointment was appropriate.

On July 7, the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario ordered \$170,000 in penalties against Great Canadian Entertainment over serious compliance failures at Pickering Casino Resort.

The AGCO found failures involving the identification and monitoring of high-risk patrons and the filing of required suspicious-transaction reports in cases involving potential money-laundering indicators. (AGCO)

Sixteen days later, on July 23, Peter Apostolopoulos's appointment to the Durham Regional Police Service Board took effect. Mr. Apostolopoulos is not simply some random business executive. The Province's own biography identifies him as a Managing Partner of Triple Group of Companies. (Public Affairs Secretariat) His family's company is behind the massive Durham Live development in Pickering — the development anchored by Pickering Casino Resort. Public records have long identified the Apostolopoulos family's investment and leadership in Durham Live.

To be absolutely clear: the AGCO penalties were imposed on Great Canadian Entertainment, the casino operator — not Peter Apostolopoulos personally. I am not accusing Mr. Apostolopoulos of involvement in those compliance failures.

But that does not make this situation acceptable.

The Durham Regional Police Service Board exists to provide civilian governance and oversight of our police service. Public confidence requires not only the absence of an actual conflict, but the absence of circumstances that can reasonably be perceived as a conflict.

Ontario's own Code of Conduct for Police Service Board Members says exactly that. It defines a conflict of interest as circumstances where a member's private interests or personal relationships "place, or may reasonably be perceived to place" them in conflict with their duties. Members must disclose conflicts and cannot participate in discussions or votes involving those matters.

So how did this appointment get through the Province's vetting process days after the casino at the centre of Durham Live was penalized for failures involving potential money-laundering indicators?

Who reviewed Mr. Apostolopoulos's business interests?

What relationships between Triple Group, Pickering Developments and the casino operator were disclosed?

What conflict-of-interest opinion was obtained?

What matters will require his recusal?

And most importantly, why wasn't all of this addressed publicly before he was placed on the board responsible for overseeing policing in Durham Region?

I am calling for an independent review of this appointment and the vetting process that preceded it, including full disclosure of any conflict assessment and the safeguards established to protect the independence of the Durham Regional Police Service Board.

I am also calling for the Inspector General of Policing to determine whether Mr. Apostolopoulos's business interests require formal disclosures or recusals under Ontario's police-board Code of Conduct. Ontario law specifically gives the Inspector General authority to investigate allegations of misconduct involving police-service-board members.

This is not about declaring someone guilty of something without evidence.

It is about asking how anyone thought these circumstances would inspire public confidence in police oversight.

For an institution where independence, integrity and public trust are everything, the appearance of conflict matters.

The Province owes Durham residents an explanation.

Concerned Citizen of Durham

Dear Editor:

Long before the release of ChatGPT, experts were warning about a future in which AI could become catastrophically dangerous. That future has arrived. Over the course of a few months, AI systems have suddenly become capable of hacking seemingly secure systems, inventing new viruses, manipulating humans to get what they want, and even colluding with one another to break out of their testing environments. If industry insiders are to be believed, this is only the beginning.

At this point, plenty of people in Silicon Valley, including some AI-company leaders, agree that it is time to slow things down. So I've spent the past few weeks trying to figure out what it would take to do just that. My main takeaway: Nobody is thinking big enough. Even the most extreme proposals currently on the table, such as a federal data-center moratorium, likely wouldn't make a huge difference. As I argue in this week's essay, there is one ambitious way to meaningfully slow down the technology's progress: an international AI nonproliferation deal.

I won't pretend that reaching this kind of agreement, which would borrow from the nuclear non-proliferation treaties of the Cold War, will be easy in our current political and geopolitical landscape. What I am sure of is that it is at least worth trying, if only because the alternative—a future in which the world's greatest superpowers and wealthiest companies continue to race to build a technology that could cause global catastrophe—would be so much worse.

— Rogé Karma

SEND LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

 newspaper@ocentral.com

or

mail to 136 Simcoe St. North Suite 4 Oshawa



CITY COUNCIL • WARD 2 • PICKERING

A city our kids can
come home to

Practical leadership. Real opportunity.
A neighbour at the council table.

See my full platform →

Meloche4Pickering.ca

john@Meloche4Pickering.ca

416-477-2658

* VOTE OCTOBER 26